



Superior Court of California County of Sutter BUDGET SNAPSHOT

February 2016



JUDICIAL COUNCIL
OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Brian R. Aronson, Presiding Judge

Stephanie M. Hansel, Court Executive Officer

(530) 822-3309

Court Service Highlights in the Current Year

- Moved into new courthouse
- Implementing new case management system

Court Service Highlights in Detail

New courthouse allows public to conduct business in a safer and more secure environment with adequate space and accommodations

On January 19, 2016 the Court moved in to our new facility. In addition to consolidating our operations into one location, the new courthouse is adjacent to City Hall, the County Jail, and the Veterans Center. The building, with six of seven court rooms completed, will significantly improve public service, security, court operational efficiency, and access to justice.

New case management system will enhance efficiency and the public's ability to access court information

The Court continues to work towards implementation of a new case management system (CMS). Project delays have put pressure on the project funds which are allowed to be encumbered for only a limited time. Implementation of the new CMS is planned for this May. Better access to court files by court users, and a reduced reliance on paper files which could potentially eliminate the need to store the paper files are just two of the anticipated benefits.

Other court services

Proactive implementation of amnesty program

We continue to reach out to the public to provide information about the amnesty program by way of our website. Traffic and collections clerks work with people to make sure they have an understanding of their eligibility.

Ongoing public service

We continue to maintain our public counter and filing hours from 8:30-4:30 with the restoration of one clerk position this year. Coverage of counters and courtrooms are priorities that impact processing operations and timelines.

Taking a number, please

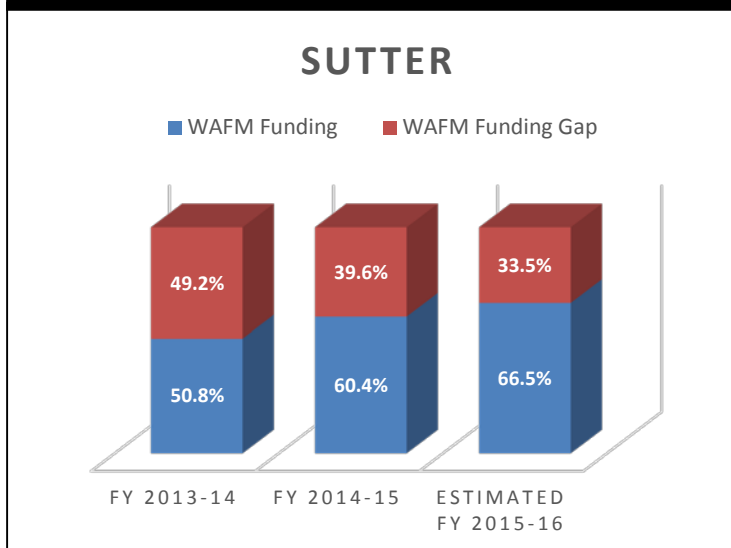
Our new public queuing system more efficiently directs court users to the services they come to court for.

Budget Challenges and Priorities

The new courthouse brought with it unexpected new expenses. Maintenance contracts for the sophisticated audio visual services and externally controlled lighting were not fully disclosed during construction. Difficult decisions will need to be made about what systems we can feasibly maintain. The new larger courthouse was designed with glass, chrome and light tile in public areas requiring a substantial increase in janitorial services.

Demands for Self-Help increased, in numbers of people and the complexity of the issues for which litigants seek assistance. Any additional services the court provides would be to the detriment of current courtroom operations, all of which impacts access to justice for court users.

Workload Allocation & Funding Gap (see reverse)



Court Demographics

Population Served	95,733
Square Miles Covered	609
Total Number of Court Facilities	1

The Workload-based Allocation & Funding Methodology (WAFM)

The Workload-based Allocation & Funding Methodology (WAFM) calculates the total funding needed for California's 58 trial courts based on case filings, workload and other factors.

To do this, WAFM relies on results from what we call the Resource Assessment Study (RAS) model to estimate total staffing needed using a weighted caseload model. Developed in partnership with national experts, the RAS model is based on a time study of over 5,000 case processing staff in 24 California trial courts. The study established a set of caseweights (amount of time in minutes to process a case from initial filing through any post-disposition activity) understanding that certain types of filings take more time and resources to handle than others. The weighted filings are used to estimate total staff needed in each court.

The WAFM model converts the staff need data into dollars, taking into account average salaries, benefits, operating expenses and equipment, and the local cost of labor using the Bureau of Labor Statistics as a benchmark. A "funding floor" is applied to the smallest trial courts because there is a basic operating threshold that must be met in order to provide service to the public. In other words, California's small courts do not have economies of scale, and yet there are basic expenditures that even the smallest courts must make. The result is, for each court, an estimate of the core operations funding required to adequately process its workload. This is known as the court's WAFM share.

Starting in FY 2013-14, a portion of each court's allocation is being recalculated according to its WAFM share. (A court's WAFM share is different from the courts' traditional share of the statewide funding. The WAFM calculation tells us what the trial courts need to function based on current filings, whereas the traditional share was based on the amount each court received from its county not taking into consideration the courts' filings or staff needs.)

Unfortunately, the total WAFM funding needed for all 58 courts exceeds the funding currently appropriated in the state budget. (This is the WAFM funding gap.) California's trial courts are underfunded by at least a collective \$444 million. The underfunding is made worse for those courts that experience a reduction of funding based on their WAFM share. To manage the budget reductions resulting from the implementation of WAFM in the absence of full trial court funding, the Judicial Council approved applying WAFM incrementally, applying it fully only to new money appropriated in the budget.

The rules of application adopted by the Judicial Council are:

- Each year beginning in FY 2013-14, and through/including to FY 2017-18, incrementally more of the historical (base) funding (using FY 2012-13 as the base) will be subject to WAFM, until 50% of the FY 12-13 base is distributed according to WAFM;
- All new state funding is distributed according to the WAFM shares; and
- For each dollar of new state funding, one dollar of the historical base will be reallocated using WAFM.